

Mother Goose Asks “Why?”

This newsletter is created and distributed by the Office of Library and Information Services in partnership with Rhode Island READS



Remarks:
by Melody Allen
RI State Coordinator

David and Goliath is an old story that keeps on reappearing, and children can easily see themselves in the role of David. A co-worker has friends staying with her until their own house is ready. She asked me to lend her some books to take home to share with their five (and a half!) year old son, Michael. So every few days I give her a new pile from the boxes of review books that I am opening. One of the books was *Bertie Was a Watchdog* in which a big, tough robber breaks into a home with a watchdog. Actually, this watchdog is called that because he is no bigger than a watch. The dog cleverly tricks the robber into raising the alarm and bringing the police.

When the dog finally is able to say, “I win” at the end of this contest, Michael readily understood that the small dog won out over the big robber “because he was smart.” Quick thinking enables the little one to solve a problem. We can all name books that offer similar themes of empowerment to small children. *Clever Beatrice*, one of my favorite books from 2001, features a girl who outwits a giant. *Titch* is always the smallest but tends the seed that grows into the biggest plant.

In another classic, *Swimmy*, a small fish organizes a school of fish to save themselves from being eaten by a big fish. *Bootsie Barker Bites* involves a girl overcoming her tormentor. In *Leo the Late Bloomer* the message is that it is normal to develop at your own pace.

In today’s world, books that empower our children are desperately needed. Books can model using your brains, teamwork and effort to overcome obstacles and solve problems.

We can find these empowering books in the *Mother Goose* program. The inchworm thinks his way out of a threatening situation. Lottie does not despair when problems arise, but instead cleverly uses what’s at hand in new ways. Jonathan does a simple activity creatively. It takes all the animals working together to balance the elephant on the seesaw. Encourage parents to talk about the strategies that a child can use when they feel overwhelmed, whether by a new and frightening situation, by an obstacle like a bully or a broken toy, or by world events. Book characters offer both strength and comfort. Michael has already learned that thinking “smart” can make you a winner.

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www.lori.state.ri.us/youthserv/mgoose

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Professional Forum

by Joseph Morra
Library and Literacy Initiatives Specialist
CHILDSPAN

At CHILDSPAN'S recent Book, Toy, and Resource Fair, a number of different manipulatives and games were offered by vendors that supported many of the themes in the *You Can Count on Mother Goose* program.

The ever-wonderful Discovery Toys has a great toy called *Measure Up! Cups*. A series of 12 cups in red, blue, green, and yellow, they increase in size with each number. What's unique about the cups is that the numbered cups equal each other in volume—simply put, the amount of "stuff" you can place in cups 2 and 8 can be equally poured into cup 10. Fun! This toy is great for measurement, number recognition, simple math equations, and problem solving.

Tangrams, a group of seven shapes—5 triangles, 1 square, and 1 parallelogram—can provide unlimited hours of learning. These 7 pieces can be fit together to form a diverse number of objects, from a rabbit to a maple leaf to a mermaid! Children can explore the shapes individually (the triangles are either isosceles or right, and the introduction to a parallelogram will surely lead to some interesting questioning), or construct infinite objects by piecing the shapes together.

Another resource from Discovery Toys is a set called *Mosaic Mysteries*, where shapes, color, and pattern cards create simple or intricate patterns to dazzle the eye. What's great about this resource is that children

can use the pattern cards as a guide, or use their own creativity and independence to produce their own patterns.

These resources, among others, are offered yearly at the Fair, which benefits CHILDSPAN'S lending library, where child care professionals can find over 4,000 resources (books, training videos, children's literature titles, and developmentally appropriate toys) to enhance their curriculum planning.

To find out more about the CHILDSPAN library, please call Joseph Morra at (401)729-0765.

MGAW Sites Across the Country by Sharon Shaloo Massachusetts Center for the Book

The Massachusetts Center for the Book is partnering with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to introduce *Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* in libraries throughout the Commonwealth.

This year, seven libraries were awarded LSTA grants to bring MGAW to their communities. Representatives of these libraries, together with some key community contacts, will be trained in the program on Oct 24, and will begin to implement the program in their cities and towns during the winter months.

Shelley Quezada, Consultant to the Underserved at the Board of Library Commissioners, is working closely with Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Center for the Book, on this initiative. They plan to offer another grant round next year for more MGAW programs while they work with Massachusetts Department of Education curriculum frameworks on ways they can modify the offerings for a better fit with DOE guidelines.

"Librarians are very excited about MGAW," says Sharon Shaloo. "They feel that it expands their view of the way they can work with all kinds of books."

The Massachusetts Center for the Book came into the Mother Goose project in the third year of the National Science Foundation grant, and so they are just now exploring ways to introduce other of the programs—especially *You Can Count on Mother Goose*—in their commonwealth. "We hope to link future Mother Goose initiatives more closely to other Center for the Book projects, most particularly to our Massachusetts Book Awards and to our emerging Literary Map but also, eventually, to Letters About Literature," says Shaloo.

Family Literacy Forum by Melody Allen

September in the library world is "Library Card Sign-Up Month." A library card is a symbol of the freedom we share as Americans under the Bill of Rights – the freedom to express your point of view and have access to a wide range of views. When I worked at my very first library job in Watertown, Massachusetts, over 30 years ago, I discovered that there was a large Armenian population in the branch's neighborhood. Each time relatives arrived in the States the children would be led to the library by those who were already here. Usually they came in on their first or second day in this country!

These families had a profound appreciation for the world a library card and learning could open up for them. Some families come to this country having had no experience of a free public library. There are those born here who have experienced libraries that did not welcome them. How can we celebrate the families with young children in our communities during "Library Card Sign-Up Month?"



- 1) Recognize that there are young children who spend the day in childcare. Reach out to providers whether center based or home based with special cards, longer loan periods and deposit collections. Let them check out books to parents for overnight use. Train providers to read with expression, ask prediction questions, make letter sounds, repeat and use new vocabulary, and encourage discussion. Create kits for providers that offer ready-to-go story times.

- 2) Honor all families who want their children, no matter how young, to have a library card. As of July 1, 2003, following *Minimum Standards for Rhode Island Public Libraries*, libraries will extend borrowing privileges to all Rhode Islanders, regardless of age. Check your library's policies and procedures to verify that our youngest patrons will grow up appreciating the rewards of having a library card. A new library card may be a routine event for a librarian, but for each child make it a major moment. Be welcoming and celebrate with a hand stamp (non-toxic) or sticker. Provide a certificate or dummy card for the child's memory book. If the card is given at the Circulation Desk,

be sure the child is given a warm welcome to the library and introduced to someone on the Children's Room staff.



- 3) Remove other obstacles to use of a library card. Provide application forms in Spanish. Ask a person who speaks Khmer to record a tape with instructions on library use that a new patron could listen to. Prepare written instructions for a deaf parent. Don't count on all parents being able to read a brochure. Be flexible about forms of identification. Show families, some of whom have never used a library (or a modern library) where books are located, how to check them out, how to know when they are due back, and where to return them, including book drops. Invite families to a monthly orientation for new cardholders, so families can learn about library programs, videos, cassettes/CDs, computer use, special collections such as toys or puppets, and museum passes. Many library web sites do not tell how to get a library card.

Professional Books

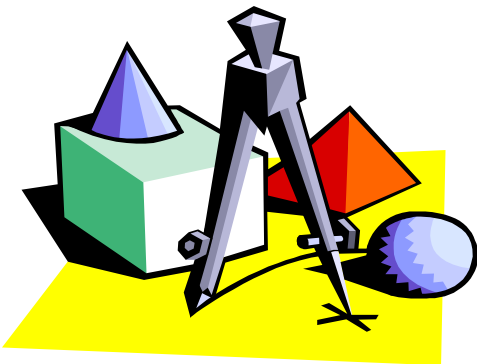


Color and Shape Books for all Ages
by Cathie Hilterbran Cooper

Exploring Science and Math with Colors and Shapes.

From birth, a child explores the world around him or her. Faces, people, nature, and even colors and shapes help the child examine, explore and experiment with things in the world around him. Many books emphasize color and shapes which helps children to learn about animals, plants, and nature and discover their connection between colors, shapes, and numbers. These books serve as supplementary resources to the science and math curriculums.

Many color and shape books that deal with science and math subjects may supplement the curriculum at primary through high school levels. At the lower levels, they serve as simple stories or informational books about colors and shapes found in natural surroundings.



Websites to Wander

www.ala.org/parentspage

The American Library Association

This website can be used for hand-outs to parents or links for children to connect with libraries. In this website you will find out *How to Raise a Reader*. The best readers are introduced to books and reading long before they enter school. Children who are read to before school age are better readers. As your child starts to grow, he or she will be ready for new reading adventures. All children learn to read at a different pace. Some learn slowly, while others will begin reading in no time. It is very important to keep reading together. The teacher will help your child to read, but it's up to you to make reading fun and meaningful in everyday life so that your child will want to be a good reader. Parents or guardians should know what books are suitable for their children. The American Library Association offers tips to help parents guide their children's reading and library use.



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Rhode Island Department of Administration

One Capitol Hill Providence, RI 02908
401-222-2726 <http://www.lori.state.ri.us>

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